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ABSTRACT

The use of popular theatre to overcome community development problems in underdeveloped countries through adult education is introduced and its relationship to the concept of participatory research is explored. Material is arranged in four sections. The first of these presents an introduction to popular theatre and participatory research. Stemming from a highly successful experimental program in northern Botswana, popular theatre is described as an adult education method in which a variety of different kinds of performance (drama, puppetry, songs, and dance) are used to engage people in more active and more aware participation in community affairs. Participatory research is described as a method of social investigation also involving full participation of the community, an educational process, and a means of taking action for a country's development. In the second section, the development of popular theatre is further discussed. An examination of the popular theatre process includes examples of initial research in which information is gathered in order to identify issues and problems and provide local detail for dramatizing them. The third section focuses on problems and issues in popular theatre, including participation, effectiveness, social and political context, and the role of outsiders. The final section compares popular theatre and participatory research, noting parallels between the two. The document concludes with appendices listing examples of social issues (general, agricultural, health, and education) faced by two Botswana communities. (LH)

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POPULAR THEATRE and PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

by
Ziki Kraai,
Bob MacKenzie
and Frank Youngman

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FOREWORD

This paper was originally written for, and presented to, the African Regional Workshop on Participatory Research which was held at Mzumbe, Tanzania, in July 1979. The Workshop was sponsored by the African Adult Education Association, and the full proceedings of the Workshop will shortly be published.

Ziki Kraai, from the Gaborone Self-Help Housing Agency, and Frank Youngman and Bob MacKenzie from the Institute of Adult Education, University College of Botswana, were invited to present a paper, because of their work with Popular Theatre. Ziki Kraai has served as a performer and organiser of Popular Theatre programmes, whilst Frank Youngman and Bob MacKenzie have mainly been involved behind the scenes, in planning and evaluation.

We have decided to reproduce this paper in the Bosele Tshwaraganang Publications series because of the important issues it raises for the development of Popular Theatre in Botswana, and to make it available to those interested in Popular Theatre as well as Participatory Research.

Anyone in Southern Africa who is interested in Participatory Research should contact Bob MacKenzie, the link man for this part of the Africa region of the Participatory Research Project, at the address below. Those who are interested in further details about Popular Theatre and the work of Lekgotla la Bosele Tshwaraganang should write direct to me.

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July 1979

The use of Popular Theatre for adult education in Botswana and its relation to the concept of Participatory Research.

by Ziki Kraii, Bob MacKenzie and
Frank Youngman

July 1979

Bosele Tsha-araganang Publications No. 12

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INTRODUCTION

This paper has four sections. In the first we show how the origins of popular theatre are similar to those of participatory research and we show that this has led to significant parallels. In the second we describe the development of popular theatre as an adult education approach and in the third we analyze aspects of the experience of the last five years. Finally we look at the relationship between popular theatre and participatory research. It should be noted that we do not consider the technical aspects of popular theatre, such as the uses of different performance media.

The concept of participatory research

The concept of participatory research has been elaborated in a number of articles by Budd Hall since 1975.[1] He has recently defined it as :

> 'a three-pronged activity: a method of social investigation involving the full participation of the community; an educational process; and a means of taking action for development.'[2]

Hall says that in its ideal form its essential components are :

- it involves the community actively in the research process;
- the subject of the research originates in the community and the problem is defined, analyzed and solved by the community;
- the process is designed to lead to community mobilisation and self-reliance and thereby to changes that directly benefit the community;
- the researcher is a committed participant working with the powerless;
- the research process has an historical perspective and is a dialogue over time rather than a static analysis of one point in time.

As an approach to research in adult education it has its origins in dissatisfaction with the prevailing quantitative methods that had come to dominate educational research in the 1960's. The search for an alternative research approach was influenced by changing ideas on development, by a growing awareness of the political functions of the social sciences and of education, and by adult education principles. Important factors were the writings of Paulo Freire and the development policies of Tanzania.

The origins of popular theatre

Popular theatre began in Botswana in 1974 with a programme that was called 'Laedza Batanani'. The idea came from Ross Kidd, an expatriate adult educator working for the University in the northern part of the country (the Bokalaka). The origins are described by him in the first publication on popular theatre in Botswana[3]:

> 'Laedza Batanani developed out of a concern to deal with the problems in the Bokalaka of limited community effort, low participation in public meetings, and apathy or indifference to government extension programmes. There was a desire to make a fresh attempt to involve people in their own development, to substitute self-reliance, participation, and co-operative action for over-dependence on government and excessive individualism.
>
> The twin goals of participation and self-reliance called for a way of bringing people together to discuss their problems, agree on changes that needed to be made and then take collective action. This goal of people meeting and working together is summarised in the slogan 'Laedza Batanani': 'The sun is already up. It's time to come and work together'. A forum for this sort of activity has traditionally been provided by the 'kgotla'* What was a way of breaking through the indifference towards kgotla meetings, and helping to revive this forum as a major focus for community decision-making and action?
>
> It was felt that traditional methods used by extension workers were inappropriate for this task. Extension workers** are more concerned with providing services (e.g. health care, dehorning cattle) and information than with motivating people for active participation in their own development.

*The 'Kgotla' is the traditional meeting place in the village.

**Extension workers are the nation-wide network of village-level workers who carry out adult education for the different government ministries and district councils. Most important are the agricultural demonstrators, the family welfare educators and the community development workers.

> Their messages are often based on external prescriptions, rather than a local assessment of needs and demands. Their messages and work are seldom co-ordinated - each officer works in isolation preaching the narrow message of his own department. Few participate in their programmes; for example, the agricultural and health clienteles are largely restricted to Master and Pupil Farmers and those who attend the Clinic'.

Faced by these problems, Ross Kidd decided to experiment with an adult education method that would use theatre and small group discussion and would develop a joint inter-agency approach to extension work. The idea of using folk media came from a UNESCO/IPPF conference in 1972 which had advocated the use of folk media in family planning communication programmes.

Popular theatre arose as an attempt to overcome specific problems in northern Botswana that were making adult education and development policies ineffective. The thinking behind the experiment was shaped by the ideas on education and development that were current in the mid-1970's, particularly those expressed in the writings of Freire and Nyerere. Some of the intellectual origins of popular theatre are therefore the same as those of participatory research. For this reason there are significant parallels between participatory research and popular theatre.[4] However, popular theatre is not a research approach. It has evolved in the search for a more effective adult education method and therefore lies within the broad tradition of adult education, which is a different historical tradition to that of social research.

A DESCRIPTION OF POPULAR THEATRE

A definition

'Popular Theatre' is the term for a variety of different kinds of performance which are used as a method of adult education. The media used for these performances in Botswana have been drama, puppetry, songs and dances. It is called 'popular theatre' because it deliberately aims to appeal to everybody, not just the educated elite. Performances take place usually in the open air and use the language of the area. The content of the performances normally refers to the situation in the area. Audience participation in singing and dancing is encouraged and after the performance the audience is invited to discuss the issues raised and consider action to solve problems.

The term was coined in Botswana in 1976 because it was felt that 'folk media' was not accurate, as drama and puppetry were not indigenous performing arts. The term has now come to cover a very wide range of activities, from a family welfare educator doing a simple puppet show for others at a clinic to a week long community festival. The common denominator of these activities is that they use entertainment for education. They bring fun, excitement and a release of creativity in an effort to engage people in more active and aware participation in community affairs.

The development of popular theatre.[5.]

The use of theatre for adult education in Botswana began in the early 1970's with sketches at meetings of health workers. Theatre was first used as the main medium of an educational campaign in 1974 in 'Laedza Batanani'. After two experimental 'Laedza Batanani' programmes, the idea was introduced in other parts of the country, beginning with 'Bosele Tshwaraganang' in Mochudi in December 1976.

Further experimental programmes took place in 1977 and the uses of popular theatre were diversified. For example, puppet shows were used by Agricultural Information Services and the Rural Industries Innovation Centre, drama was used in the Botswana Extension College's Literacy Project. The popular theatre method gained credibility and official recognition as an interesting adult education approach. A national co-ordinating committee was established - the Popular Theatre Committee. It stressed that the approach could not work in isolation but must be used where appropriate in an overall education programme.

The end of the experimental phase came when the Popular Theatre Committee organized a National Popular Theatre Workshop in May 1978. This brought together 60 extension workers from all over the country and introduced them to the approach and the skills involved. At the same time the University's Institute of Adult Education appointed a Lecturer to work full time on the development of popular theatre.

In the year since the national workshop there has been a great increase in popular theatre activities. Several areas have established popular theatre committees and the national committee (named in Setswana Lekgotla La Bosele Tshwaraganang) has become a more representative body with members from different districts as well as central agencies. There has been an increase in the number of small-scale uses, such as at Lobatse hospital open day and in Odi Weavers Factory. There have also been more large-scale programmes, particularly week-long community campaigns, such as in Kalamare and Ratholo. These activities have been supported by an improved training programme.

The popular theatre process

The diversity of people using popular theatre and of situations in which it is used make it impossible to say that there is a simple formula. However, a basic process can be identified. It has discernible stages :

- Planning
- Research
- Problem selection and analysis
- Performance Preparation
- Performance
- Discussion
- Follow-up action

These stages can take place over varying lengths of time and can have different levels of complexity. In general, the decision at the planning stage to undertake a popular theatre programme is taken by either a team of extension workers from different agencies (at district level or village level) or by an individual extension agency. The choice of popular theatre is made in order to meet their educational objectives. For example, a district team might feel that one area has been neglected by extension workers and should experience some educational activity, or a group of health educators might regard popular theatre as an appropriate way of communicating information about nutrition. The decision to use popular theatre on the whole originates outside the community in which it is used. The content of the programme is also often decided outside the community.

The planning stage is followed by the research stage, about which more is said below. At this stage either the community identifies several issues itself or, as more frequently happens, the organisers investigate local knowledge, attitudes and practice about the theme they have already chosen. After this research, the problems for presentation are selected and analyzed and then the performance is prepared. Generally, the performers are the same group of extension workers who have been organizing the programme. But a significant development in the last year (particularly in 'Laedza Batanani' in 1978 and at Kalamare and Ratholo in 1979) has been the increasing number of ordinary villagers who have become involved in preparing and producing the performance.

The performance itself may be simply a short puppet show or it might be a two hour multi-media event with puppets, plays, songs and dances. Its aim is to present relevant social issues and problems in an entertaining way that will act as a catalyst for discussion and action. Although Western concepts of presentation have tended to dominate in the past, expatriates working with popular theatre programmes are increasingly accepting indigenous attitudes to, say, the use of space in the stage area and verbal presentation of themes rather than their demonstration through action. Stress has been laid on performances being at a simple level of equipment and technical skill so that the method is as accessible as possible. For example, all performances are unscripted and the actors improvise within an agreed story-line. Probably the most complicated technical skills are making and using puppets. Training has concentrated on giving people an understanding of the educational process rather than theatre techniques.

The performance, which can attract an audience of hundreds, is immediately followed by small group discussions which the actors organize. The groups then form a plenary discussion in which an attempt is made to clarify problems and decide on forms of co-operative action. Because local action is the aim of the whole programme, every effort is made to involve the local extension workers, teachers, and leaders who could take responsibility for follow-up action.

The final stage is for the extension workers to follow up decisions taken by the audience after the performance. This can be done by further educational efforts, provision of expertise, supply of resources (e.g. seeds), and other assistance to people trying to implement decisions (e.g. committees).

The research stage

The popular theatre process starts with a research stage in which information is gathered in order to identify issues and problems and to provide local detail for dramatising them. This stage can involve a totally open-ended approach, in which the community itself raises the problems and specifies their context; or it can involve an outside agency which has already identified a problem (say, bilharzia) gathering information so that the problem can be clearly situated in its local context.

Two main ways have been used to gather information at this research stage. One has been to bring village representatives together for a community workshop of one or two days. The other is to hold discussions with organized groups (such as a kgotla meeting or village development committee) and to conduct interviews with individuals and informal groups of people. Organizing this stage of the process has developed over the years through experience and we give below four different examples of research approaches :

a) Mochudi 1976

The programme undertaken in Mochudi in 1976 was closely modelled on the experience gained in 'Laedza Batanani' and was the first major popular theatre programme outside the Bokalaka area. The decision to hold the programme was taken by the Kgatleng District Extension Team (which included district heads of extension services and other district officers).

The programme started with a one-day community workshop. 70 people came to the workshop in order to learn about popular theatre and identify social issues in Mochudi which could be dealt with in a popular theatre campaign. The participants were extension workers, teachers, village development committee members and representatives of voluntary organisations. After a demonstration, they held group discussions and then reported to the plenary session on the problems they perceived as most important in the village. A list of twenty-eight issues was produced. (See Appendix 1).

The community workshop was followed by a two-day actors' workshop. This was atterded by extension workers and head teachers and was directed by staff from the Botswana Extension College and the University. This group took the list of problems identified previously and chose the most important according to the following criteria suggested by the organisers :-

- the relative importance given to problems by the previous workshop;
- the relevance of the problem to the season (e.g. the problem of bush fires was rejected because it was the rainy season);
- the need for the problem to be specific rather than general;
- the potential for action that could actually change the situation.

The group decided to have a puppet show focussing on rubbish disposal and latrines, and a family drama including V.D. drunkenness and poor attendance at meetings. The actors then analyzed these problems in terms of their understanding of people's knowledge, attitudes and practice so that they could clarify messages and dramatise them realistically.

b) Lentswe Le Tau 1978

Lentswe Le Tau is a small village of about 700 people in the Kwaneng District. It was visited by a team of participants from the National Popular Theatre Workshop who intended to perform there a few days later. The decision to visit the village was taken by the workshop organisers. The information-gathering took one day. Firstly, the team met at the kgotla where a meeting had been called specially by the chief. After explaining the purpose of the visit the team divided the meeting into small groups of ten and held discussions in these small groups. These group interviews took about two hours and afterwards the villagers dispersed.

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The team then gathered together and discussed their results. The group interviews had elicited some major problems. The team decided to divide into groups of two and three to find out more about the problems and about local details. These small groups each had a different task. One group had to interview the shopkeepers and another the beer-brewers. One group had to find out more about the legend of the snake in the local caves and another had to get an understanding of the village's geography. This took another four hours.

The next day at the workshop, the team prepared a performance based on their analysis of the problems and on the contextual details they had found out. The main theme of the play was that the village had recognized its social problems (such as migrant labourers drinking at shebeens and causing violence) but had not yet achieved the unity necessary to solve them (because of tensions between the chief and the councillor). The possibility of a co-operative project, such as a community centre, was suggested.

c) Gaborone 1978-9

Gaborone Town Council has a Self-Help Housing Agency (SHHA) which is responsible for upgrading the squatter area of Old Naledi into a legal 'site and service' housing area. The upgrading project's implementation is monitored by a monthly meeting of SHHA staff, the Town Councillor for Old Naledi, and the elected representatives from the Ward Development Committee. These meetings act as a forum for dialogue between the Town Council and the people of Old Naledi. Often the SHHA staff use performances (including drama, songs, dances and poetry) to explain issues to committee members and to act as a catalyst for discussion in the meeting. This helps the members to understand each step of the upgrading project, so that they can be a more effective link between the people of the area and the SHHA staff.

Because the small-scale use of theatre in these meetings proved successful for conveying information, SHHA decided to use the technique for a public information campaign on the complex topic of the Certificate of Rights. The issue of Certificates of Rights is a crucial stage in the upgrading project because it provides leases for housing plots, thus giving the squatters legal rights to their land. But the change in status to a site and service area means that the residents have obligations (such as service levies) and it has also meant a certain amount of dislocation as plots have been regularized and some cleared for roadways. SHHA decided to use popular theatre to explain what was happening and to clarify the people's new rights and obligations. To research people's attitudes and levels of knowledge, a 10% stratified sample of one ward was taken and this sample population was formally interviewed. The findings were analyzed by SHHA staff and used by them to prepare a performance to be put on in each ward in the area.

d) Kalamare 1979

The Mahalapye Development Trust and the University brought together an inter-agency team of extension workers to undertake a joint community project in which popular theatre would be used first to expose social issues and then to monitor community action on them. It was decided to hold the first part of the project in Kalamare, where the sub-chief was keen to have a workshop.

The visiting team of outsiders consisted of eleven people. They gave a demonstration of popular theatre to the villagers and got volunteers from the village to join them. The next day, the team split into groups of three, each with a local villager, and went to interview people in different wards of the village.

A list of 18 issues was collected. (See Appendix 2). Then the participants split into two large groups, which each chose issues from the list and dramatized them using local details. One drama was about poor attendance at meetings, the other about the need for more transport and better medical facilities.

These four examples show how research is undertaken for popular theatre and how it fits into the overall process.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN POPULAR THEATRE

Popular theatre has evolved as a method of adult education which as a process has similarities with the participatory research process outlined in the introduction. In this section we analyse some of the problems and issues in popular theatre that we think will be of particular interest to users of participatory research. The last five years has been a period of activism rather than reflection and parts of our analysis are tentative and indicate the need for further investigation and consideration.

Participation

There are three groups of people currently involved in popular theatre activities - expatriate adult educators and district government officials, extension workers, and ordinary people. The participation of each group has been different and is undergoing changes.

The expatriates, such as adult educators, working at the University and district-level planning officers, played a crucial role in the early development of popular theatre. They were involved actively in planning and implementing programmes. They have become less directly important but continue to have a significant training function and a role in the development of the process.

The extension workers at district and village-level have always been directly involved in implementing programmes. They have now taken control of planning and organising programmes and are beginning to take a part in training others as they build up their own experience.

Ordinary villagers have always been involved in providing information, and in participating as the audience and as the people discussing problems and taking action to solve them. Increasingly they are also taking a part in organising programmes, in acting as researchers, and in performances. They have not yet taken control of the popular theatre process as a whole and only rarely have they taken the initiative in deciding to have a programme. (Exceptions include the Bokalaka area where the fame of 'Laedza Batanani' has spread over the years so that villages have asked to be included, and the Odi Weavers Factory where worker-directors decided that popular theatre could help the factory discuss its management problems). Exactly who in a community does get involved has not yet been analysed. Certainly, village leaders dominate and there are tendencies to exclude ethnic minorities. However, we cannot yet say which section of the community will dominate when the process is more under community control.

Effectiveness

Evaluating popular theatre is a complex task and work is currently being undertaken by the University's Institute of Adult Education to develop ways of doing it. However, it seems reasonable to say that effectiveness must be assessed in terms of its aims. In general, popular theatre has the aim of getting people to participate in an educational process that will lead to action to solve problems. Within this general aim, more specific objectives can be identified.

Participation as an objective means trying to involve the community as much as possible at all all stages in the process. For example, it means villagers working as researchers and actors; it means attracting a large audience whose interest and attention is captured; it means people coming together to take action.

Education has as objectives developing people's awareness and knowledge of social problems and how they might solve them; and developing people's understanding of the popular theatre process. It requires a performance which reflects the local situation and provides accurate technical information. It also requires well-run post-performance discussion to clarify issues and fill knowledge gaps. And it values the expressive functions of popular theatre, which can bring creative entertainment and an assertion of culture and identity.

Action as an aim requires observable outcomes from the total popular theatre programme. Specific objectives are that individuals do something to change their situation (e.g. hiring their vehicles out in Kalamare to challenge the transport monopoly; or referring themselves to the clinic in Mochudi for a V.D. check-up) or that community groups undertake co-operative projects (e.g.developing a water filtering system). Also, it means the extension workers should follow up the performance and discussion stage in ways that will encourage action.

The evidence of observation and practical experience is that many of these aims and objectives are achieved. Community participation is increasing (as at Kalamare and Ratholo) and large, interested audiences have always been attracted and keen to discuss what they have seen. Most performances are applauded for their relevance, and the organisation of post-performance discussion is improving.

Some aims are difficult to assess. It is hard to say if awareness has been heightened. The fun and enjoyment of popular theatre for all concerned cannot be quantified. However, a number of important problems areas can be identified, in which some of the many aims of popular theatre are clearly not being achieved. The two most important are in the areas or education and action.

The success of the popular theatre process in teaching people about specific areas of knowledge (such as the causes of bilharzia and how it can be cured) has not been established. Certainly, learning needs reinforcement and too often the excitement of the performance takes all the attention, so that it becomes something in itself rather than a catalyst to raise interest and lead on to another stage of learning in order to act. On occasion handouts have been distributed to the audience to back up information given in the performance. But on the whole the place of the performance event in the overall educational programme has often been poorly understood. Also, some technical subjects, like bilharzia, raise questions beyond the expertise of the village-level worker and audience discussion can lead to false information being given.

These educational problems are not unique to popular theatre but the large numbers involved exacerbate the problems. What is unique to popular theatre is the novelty and interest of the medium itself and this does sometimes district the audience from the message, as at Mochudi in 1976.

The other major problem area, which popular theatre also shares with other adult education activities, is how to move from the stage of discussion and learning to actual action for change. There are some examples of action that can be directly linked to popular theatre programmes, e.g. individuals borrowing from the Odi Weavers Factory's community fund after it has been advertised by popular theatre, and a group starting a communal water filtering system after a programme by the Rural Industries Innovation Centre.

But on the whole, little immediate action can be discerned. This can be attributed to two factors. The first is that suggested technical solutions are often inappropriate - for example, the programme in Mochudi 1976 advocated pit latrines in an area in which the rock bed makes them prohibitively expensive. The second is a lack of understanding of the social and political constraints on individual and collective action for change, a problem we look at below.

The social and political context

The kind of problems that people perceive in their communities and which are identified during the research stage of popular theatre can be seen in the two appendices.

Many of these are in fact the product of deep-rooted structural causes, particularly the migrant labour system and the transition from traditional to modern authority.

Botswana's underdevelopment is a direct product of the colonial period which lasted from 1885 to 1966. During this time the country was incorporated into the economy of the Southern African region whose centre is South Africa. Botswana's own development was restricted so that investment was concentrated in the development of South Africa's mines, farms and manufacturing enterprises. From the 1890's, Botswana became a source of cheap, unskilled migrant labour. This has profoundly affected Botswana's society and continues to do so, with half the young men in some areas away from home. By taking young men away, the system has reduced agricultural productivity and disrupted traditional social organisation, particularly kinship obligations.

Many of the problems communities list have their origins in the migrant labour system, both generalised problems, such as poverty and rural unemployment, and specific problems like drunkenness and widespread venereal disease. In popular theatre performances the returned miner, given to drinking and womanising, is a frequent character and this is a reflection of the social significance of migrant labour.

There is also a conflict between modern political structures (such as district councils and village development committees) and traditional structures (such as chieftainship and the kgotla). Botswana is in a transitional phase in which the power of the chiefs is being eroded (for example, the Government took away their right to allocate land in 1968) and forms of representative democracy are being established. The conflict between hierarchical, authoritarian power and democratic, representative power is as yet unresolved, particularly as many politicians derive their personal power from traditional authority. This leads to apathy and inertia at the village level, with people neither attending kgotla meetings nor village development committee meetings.

These two examples indicate the complex historical origins of many problems. Communities tend to identify the problems on the surface and point to, say, the personality conflict between a chief and a councillor, without recognizing the structural causes of the local problem. Too often the popular theatre process remains at a superficial level of analysis, and this has led to unrealistic proposals for action which have not considered what can actually be changed at the community level.

Those of us involved in popular theatre have generally aimed for action for change without analysing clearly enough the situation in which change is to take place. We have advocated forms of action, such as co-operation and voluntary contributions of labour, which ignore the historical processes that have diminished traditional forms of co-operation (such as tribal regiments) and have increased individualism and concern for cash rewards. There is particularly a contradiction in advocating self-help when government policies such as giving food for work in drought periods and massive provision of physical facilities have encouraged a concept of development that regards government action as the source of change. It may also be unrealistic to expect collective action leading to change to take place when local leadership is both ambiguous and ambivalent. In many situations, the people may remain inactive because they do not know where or how initiative should originate.

In this respect we have not given enough attention to community power structures and analysed which interests will support change and which will oppose it. This is not to say that those working with popular theatre are alone in their problem of failing to generate action. All educational activities are constrained by the particular political context in which they operate. What is needed is a more realistic understanding of the parameters of change and the factors leading to change. For example, it is simplistic to think that more knowledge can, of itself, lead to change. A person may fully understand the benefit of ploughing early but not have access to the necessary draft power. His inability to act in a different way is therefore a product of the social distribution of wealth rather than personal levels of knowledge and understanding.

The implication of this is that popular theatre needs to take a longer-term perspective in its objective of action for change. It has tended to be superficial in its approach and to think that one performance and discussion will make an immediate difference. Three refinements of its use would be helpful. First, a more explicit concern during the research, problem analysis, and performance preparation stages with understanding the historical origins of problems and with assessing the possibilities for change. (This means, for example, refining the criteria for choosing what to dramatise). Secondly, it could apply the experience from Ghana of using popular theatre repeatedly in order to analyse the problems of implementing action proposals. This has been suggested in Kalamare, where the team intends to return in six months to start a process of assessment. In this way greater awareness would be generated and make the possibilities of future action better.

Thirdly, popular theatre needs to be more carefully fitted into a wider programme for use at a point at which its capacity to generate excitement and participation could have the maximum effect.

The role of the outsider

The argument above suggests that the role of outsiders bringing popular theatre to a community needs careful consideration, as they bring a new element into the social situation, especially as the decision to undertake a popular theatre programme is rarely taken by a community.

The decision to use popular theatre has in the past been significantly influenced by expatriate adult educators and district planners. It is now increasingly taken by the district-level popular theatre committees which come under the national committee, Lekgotla La Bosele Tshwaraganang. The district committees are composed of extension workers with popular theatre experience, and are often senior staff rather than village-level workers. It is therefore extension workers, whether they work at community level or not, who are the most important 'outsiders' in relation to the ordinary people in the community.

Extension workers are civil servants and form part of the country's educated elite. They are perceived as outsiders by the communities they work in and this is often reinforced by their professional attitudes in implementing government policies. Because of their crucial role in the popular theatre process, these attitudes play a significant part in shaping the content and presentation of performance. An example is health issues. When there are health themes, the dramas often attack traditional medicine because the extension workers' general education and professional training inclines them to denigrate traditional practices. Similarly, their modern views can cause offence to audiences, as in the treatment of the V.D. theme in Mochudi in 1976 which showed condoms on stage.

Not enough attention has been given to the relationship between the popular theatre team and the community. Participation as a goal implies community involvement in decision-making (in this it is qualitatively different from the goal of consultation) but as yet the relationship between the outsiders and the community has been unequal, with the extension workers having much more power in the popular theatre process. A modest initial objective of popular theatre has been to encourage extension workers to 'start where people are', to take care to understand people's perceptions of the world and to build on the knowledge they have when designing educational programmes. But the wider aim of participation demands greater concern with the issue of who controls the various stages of the popular theatre process.

POPULAR THEATRE AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

In the previous sections we have described the popular theatre process and analysed some of its aspects. We now consider the relationship between popular theatre and participatory research. We regard them as two distinct activities although there are many parallels in purpose and method. In order to explore further the relationship we have made a comparison of the stages in each process, which clarifies some of the similarities and differences.

Similarities and Differences

The following table is based on our description of popular theatre above and Swantz's description of the steps in participatory research in her paper 'Participatory Research' - An Educational Approach to Development Studies'.[6.]

Stage	Popular Theatre	Participatory Research
1.	Planning	
2.	Research	Identifying the problems and learning to understand the concepts of the people
3.	Problem Selection	Analysing the data in relation to the practical problem at hand.
4.	Performance preparation	Relating the people's concepts and values to a theoretical framework and to generalisation for policy.
5.	Performance	Translating the research findings into language meaningful to the people in practical terms.
6.	Discussion	Getting feedback and learning from people's reactions.
7.	Follow-up action	

Stage 1.

The initiative for a popular theatre programme generally comes from outside the community and planning decisions are taken by the team of outsiders which is organising the programme. It is unclear from the literature where decisions to do participatory research are taken and what role the community takes in planning.

Stage 2.

The methods used at the research stage of popular theatre include community workshops and group and individual interviews. Sometimes this involves survey techniques, such as the interviews with a random sample of the population used by the Gaborone Self Help Housing Agency. This use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques is found in the work of Swantz although some writers on participatory research tend to see no place for survey approaches. Both popular theatre and participatory research aim to understand problems from the viewpoint of the community.

Stage 3.

After the research stage of popular theatre, if the approach has been open-ended, a selection is made from the identified problems according to criteria such as the potential for local solution. This sifting of the information is usually in the control of the extension workers, though community participation in the process is increasing. Examples of participatory research such as the village grain storage project in Tanzania,[7] indicate that a similar process of interaction between the research team and the community occurs. The experience of this stage, with its potential for dialogue, needs further analysis in both cases to clarify issues such as control and different modes of knowledge.

Stage 4.

At this stage in popular theatre, the technical considerations of the scenario and the various media tend to dominate, though the general aim is to depict the chosen issues in a clear and direct way that will focus the audience's attention. This is very similar to the stage in the grain storage project when the villagers' ideas were codified in drawings. We think that dramatisations could be used in the participatory research process at this point, as an alternative to pictures or verbal reports.

A major difference occurs here when participatory research takes a wider view, and is concerned with a level of abstraction and generalisation that goes beyond popular theatre's more immediate aims. As Swantz suggests, in some cases the research will have aims beyond the immediate benefits to a particular community. This means the total research effort cannot all be focussed at the local level but must provide data for generalisations to inform national policies or to develop theoretical frameworks.

Stage 5.

There is a close parallel at this stage when each activity attempts to return information and analysis to the community in a clear way that will suggest the need for practical action to solve problems.

Stage 6.

Again at this stage both activities encourage discussion of the findings in order to develop awareness and analysis and to learn from people's reactions so that solutions emerge.

Stage 7.

At this final stage in the popular theatre process it is intended that the community and its leaders will, with the help of the extension workers, undertake action to solve the identified problems. Similarly, the description of the village grain storage project indicates that a special committee was established to assist people.

This comparison of the stages in the two processes shows their similarities and differences. The most significant difference probably lies in the overall aims of the two activities. The concept of participatory research is one of a process involving people's participation in research, education and action. It is not clear which of these activities is accorded most significance in practice. Is immediate community action (such as building better grain stores) more important than gathering accurate data from which to make abstractions and generalisations? Does participation in itself have value irrespective of outcomes? What is the main aim of participatory research?

The situation is clearer in regard to popular theatre, which is also a participatory activity involving research, education and action. Research in itself is not important. It is used only to make the other activities more effective. Most significance has been given so far to the development of popular theatre as an educational method.

There has been a concern to demonstrate that learning can be fun, that education can be people-centred, that more flexible and responsive approaches can be used for teaching and learning. In consequence, there has been a preoccupation with technique and the aim of social action has been given too little weight.

To sum up, we can say that although popular theatre and participatory research share similarities as processes, there are differences in their aims and the significance given to them.

Some Conclusions

Popular theatre has evolved pragmatically. Although some of those involved have articulated the approach in terms of development theories and adult education principles, most of those actively engaged in implementing programmes have been more concerned with improving the techniques being used. The result has been that activity has taken precedence over analysis. This has been a necessary stage of evolution because it has provided the varied experience from which to draw hypotheses that can be tested by further experience.

In our case study, we have made some observations which we hope will make a contribution to further analytic work. We think that certain key questions need detailed consideration :

- Who uses popular theatre and why?
- in what situations is popular theatre used?
- What part does popular theatre play in wider development programmes?
- in what way is popular theatre linked to individual and collective action?
- What are the constraints on action for change and on people's participation in development?

Some ideas on these questions arise from our paper. Further ideas arise from having considered popular theatre in relation to participatory research. For example, participatory research's emphasis on a dynamic, historical perspective seems to us very important, as does the concern with understanding the cognitive world of the community.

In turn, we think that the questions we have listed about popular theatre could well be asked of participatory research. We think that some of the writing on participatory research underemphasises the effect of particular political and social contexts, both at the level of national policies and ideologies, and at the level of community stratifications and power structures. The political context in fact determines the options for tactics and strategies for change and by not stressing it participatory research writers sometimes appear to take a simplistic position on the role of the researchers. In the end, this is the most important question facing both participatory research and popular theatre - what part can the researcher and the adult educator play in achieving the ideal of people's participation in development?

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2. B.L. Hall, op cit 1978.

3. R. Kidd and M. Byram - 'Folk Media and Development - a Botswana case study' (printed by Botswana Extension College), June 1976.

4. On this point, and several others, we are in disagreement with views expressed by R.Kidd and M.Byram in 'Popular Theatre - a technique for Participatory Research', Participatory Research Project Working Paper No.5, 1978.

5. Popular Theatre in Botswana is well documented in a series of publications produced by Lekgotla la Bosele Tshwaraganang. The first eleven publications are shown on the inside front cover of this paper, which forms part of the series.

6. M.L. Swantz,'Participatory Research - an Educational Approach to Development Studies'. Bureau of Resources and Land Use Planning, Dar es Salaam, 1977.

7. I.N. Resnick, 'Grain Storage at the Village Level' Ideas and Action No.100, 1978.

APPENDIX A

SOCIAL ISSUES IN MOCHUDI(1976)

GENERAL ISSUES

1. Unemployment, low incomes and high prices, poverty and destitution.
2. Marital and Family problems (jealousy, divorce, illegitimate children, overdrinking, disrespect by children).
3. Youth (lack of respect, unemployment, delinquency, crime, overdrinking).
4. Community Participation (poor meeting attendance, whipping in tribal court, poor co-operation between VDC and Councillor).
5. Lack of Facilities (roads, bridges, transport, wood, boreholes).

AGRICULTURE

6. Ploughing too late and low acceptance of modern methods.
7. Chicken disease and rabid dogs.
8. Problems with bonus for cattle sold at Botswana Meat Commission.
9. Bush fires are widespread.
10. Few vegetable gardens.
11. No co-operatives.
12. Donkeys are mistreated.
13. Cattle and pigs are wandering around village.
14. Cattle theft.

HEALTH

15. Lack of health facilities and services (no clinic, doctor, nurse or meat inspector).

16. Lack of basic health knowledge.

17. Water supply problems (dirty, no reticulation).

18. No latrines, dirty public toilet, dirty public rubbish bins.

19. Lack of fresh milk (no dairy) and vegetables.

20. Venereal disease widespread.

21. Road safety a problem - cars speed in village.

22. Drunkenness and dagga smoking.

23. Mental illness.

24. Dangerous trenches in village.

EDUCATION

25. Lack of classrooms, fencing, water supply.

26. Lack of, and untrained, teachers. Little teacher accommodation.

27. Not enough places for children.

28. Lack of co-operation between P.T.A's and head-teachers.

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL ISSUES IN KALAMARE (1979)

1. The water supply - most people have to walk a long way to fetch water from the only tap in the village. So some use dangerously stagnant pools as their supply.

2. The clinic is totally inadequate and the Family Welfare Educator only treats children. A fully trained nurse who treats adults as well is necessary.

3. Transport is inadequate. The chief monopolises transport to Mahalapye. His fares are high.

4. There are no butcheries in the village.

5. There is no cafe.

6. There is a lot of poverty.

7. There is a need for a farmers' co-operative so that fertilisers and other goods are obtainable at a reasonable price.

8. The village needs a post-office. At the moment post is delivered to the shop in a box, so anyone can read anyone's letter.

9. There is no place to buy cattle medicines.

10. The roads are bad in the rainy season.

11. There is a lot of unemployment.

12. Villagers are reluctant to attend kgotla meetings and courses held in the village.

13. Juvenile delinquency is high, especially among young girls who devote most of their time to parties.

14. Automatic promotion at school doesn't help the child's education.

15. The people are interested in self-help projects, but need help from the government as well.

16. There is a lack of bridges.

17. Parents do not have money for children after primary school and there is also no employment for such school-leavers.

18. Poor farmers have difficulty with ploughing - they don't have enough money to hire oxen or tractors.